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Golden Jubilee of the Church's Approbation of the Cecilian Society.

The sixteenth day of December of the present year is the golden jubilee date of the Church's solemn approbation of the Cecilian Society founded by the Rev. Dr. F. X. Witt in 1868 at Bamberg, Germany. This approbation was given on December 16th, 1870, by Pope Pius IX in the form of the Apostolic Brief *Multum ad commovendos animos*. All who have at heart the interest of the liturgy and music of the Church ought to be alive to the importance of this official papal sanction of the Cecilian reform movement. Still there may be some, especially among the younger generation of *Caecilia* readers, who could be helped to a fuller realization of the importance that attaches to this document. It is therefore thought advisable to present to them on this golden anniversary, even though in roughest outline, a sketch of the earliest history of the Cecilian movement.

In 1865 F. X. Witt, then a young priest with but 10 years' experience in the sacred ministry; but withal a priest possessing the zeal and courage of an Apostle and the mental and musical gifts of a genius, resolved to strike a blow at the decadent state of church music in his native land, Bavaria. His first thrust, delivered in pamphlet form, was a slashing exposé of prevalent abuses; it proved a veritable sensation. In the following year, 1866, the young reformer, bent on constructive work, launched a periodical called *Fliegende Blaetter fuer katholische Kirchenmusik*, which he used as an organ of propaganda for his reform ideas and as a medium of discussion of liturgical and liturgico-musical subjects, of questions of organization, etc. In September of the year 1867 we find Witt addressing the Eighteenth General Congress of German Catholics at Innsbruck, Tyrol, in the interest of his plan of reform; he pleads for recognition and encouragement for the reform movement, requests that a separate section, or department of the Congress be devoted to the discussion of Church music, and pro-

poses the organization of a society for promoting the reform of Church music. In one of the next issues of his *Fliegende Blaetter* he publishes a tentative draft of the Constitution of his projected society. Next, in 1868, Witt launches another magazine of Church music, called *Musica Sacra*. By this time he has rallied to his standard some 500 priests, choirmasters, and organists, to whom he now issues a call to join him in deliberation at the Nineteenth General Catholic Congress at Bamberg. The response was international, his adherents coming to Bamberg from all parts of Germany, from German Austria, from Bohemia, from Poland, and from Hungary. At this Catholic Congress, in 1868, the Cecilian Society was formally constituted and Witt named its first president.

The Cecilian Society, as here organized, is in reality a federation of Cecilian societies, since it comprises district, diocesan, and parish groups. Each district and diocesan group is organized and functions on the same general plan as the federation itself. The president of each diocesan group is *eo ipso* a member of a board of directors, who, with the President-General, two Vice-Presidents, and a Treasurer, form the supreme governing body of the General Society.

The object of the General Cecilian Society as stated in its Constitution is the betterment and promotion of Catholic Church music according to the mind and spirit of the Church. Hence the Society aims solely to bring about a practical execution of the ecclesiastical decrees and precepts relating to Church music and to this end gives its attention in specie to Gregorian Chant, to figured, polyphonic music, both ancient and modern, to the church hymn in the vernacular, to ecclesiastical organ music, and to other kinds of instrumental music permitted by the Church. For achieving its purpose the Society makes use of the following means: censorship of musical compositions; recommendation and spread of music written in a churchly style and of instructive liturgical and musical literature; circulation of the Society's official organ; gatherings and conferences of the district groups; gen-

eral conventions at least every 2 or 3 years for purposes of discussion and for giving exemplary productions and demonstrations of Church music.

Because of its closely-knit, almost perfect organization, its definite and practical program, and especially because of the holy zeal and untiring efforts of its founder and charter members, the Cecilian Society achieved phenomenal success almost from the very beginning. To what extent it succeeded is clearly demonstrated by the fact that, within two years from the day of the Society's foundation at Bamberg in 1868, twenty-nine bishops who were in attendance at the Vatican Council at Rome presented a joint petition to Pope Pius IX asking him for his official approbation of the Society. This approbation was solemnly given on December 16, 1870, when Pope Pius IX issued his celebrated Brief *Multum ad commovendos animos*.

By this Brief the Cecilian Society received canonical sanction and protection—the highest ecclesiastical endorsement. It was also honored with a Cardinal-Protector. Henceforth, whatever else one might choose to criticize in the Society or its members, it was no longer permissible to dispute or challenge the correctness of the Society's tendency and program as laid down in its Constitution. The Cecilian program of Church music was, by this Papal Brief, declared to be co-extensive and identical with the program of the Church herself. And thus implicitly the lie was given to all those who at that time maintained and to all those who even in our day maintain that the Cecilian Society champions but one particular style of Church music. By quoting verbatim from the Society's Constitution, the Apostolic Brief of Pope Pius IX bears testimony to the universality of the Society's program of licit Church music. The Society stands for all that is enjoined or recommended by ecclesiastical authority in matters of Church music. That is the extent of the Society's scope. Beyond that the Society does not go, for ecclesiastical authority is its sole basis. The Cecilian Society has no desire to be more papal than the Pope, nor does it seek to be more churchly than the Church. No other organization which, anywhere under the sun, offers itself as a substitute for the Cecilian Society, may claim to meet adequately the wishes of the Church, if such an organization stands for even one jot less than is enunciated in the official program of the Cecilian Society. It is well to emphasize this at this day and date, when,

to some minds, it seems necessary to resort to a compromise with individualism and latitudinarianism in order to find a bond of union for a society of church musicians.

Fortified with Rome's approbation, the Cecilian movement spread ever more rapidly, and before very long it had most dioceses of Germany organized and measuring up more and more to the requirements of true liturgical music. More than that, it also radiated its beneficent influence into other countries; for, to quote Weinmann (*History of Church Music*), "with the Society a factor entered into the world in which most if not all efforts toward the reform of Church music found their common centre." Organizations taking Dr. Witt's Cecilian Society for their pattern sprang up in Switzerland, in Bohemia (St. Cyril Society), in Holland, in Ireland (1878), in England (1876), and in our own United States, where the esteemed editor of the *Caecilia*, Prof. J. Singenberger, himself a pupil of Dr. Witt, founded the American Cecilian Society in 1873. And even as late as the year 1905, the Cecilian Society founded by Dr. Witt served as a model in the organization of the Society of St. Cecelia in Italy. This Italian Cecilian Society, it should be added here, made its recent Congress of Sacred Music (held Sept. 13-16, 1920, at Turin, Italy) the occasion for a festive golden jubilee commemoration of the issue of the Papal Brief *Multum ad commovendos animos*. It is well to note this fact, for it shows that the Italian Cecilians, who have been very active during the last 15 years, thoroughly identify themselves with the Cecilian movement which, as inaugurated by Dr. Witt, received from the Church its credentials as a world movement on December 16, 1870.

May these lines written in commemorative retrospect be an inducement to the readers of the *Caecilia* to renew their zeal and interest for a cause upon which the Church has solemnly placed the seal of her approval. May the readers of the *Caecilia*, on this golden anniversary of that approbation, feel a new incentive to remain true to this cause, by recalling the life and work of him, to whose noble soul the Apostolic Brief of December 16, 1870, must have brought unspeakable joy and satisfaction. May they, for their own example, encouragement, and inspiration, hold forever enshrined in their hearts the memory of the heroic founder and greatest protagonist and propagandist of the Cecilian reform movement—Dr. F. X. Witt.

A. L.

VORTRAG UND AUSDRUCK IM GESANGE.*

Wem daran gelegen ist, sich einen guten Vortrag zu eigen zu machen, der muss vorerst der ganzen Gesangstechnik vollkommen Meister sein und mit seiner Stimme ebensowohl, die feinsten, in einander übergehenden, Abstufungen der Stärkegrade, als jede Passage und Fioritur leicht und anmutig auszuführen vermögen. Sodann sei er bei der Ausführung selbst bemüht, die durch die verschiedenen Vortragszeichen und Vorschriften des Componisten kund gegebenen Absichten desselben möglichst getreu zu reproduciren und lasse deshalb keine Tempobezeichnung, kein *ritardando* oder *stringendo*, kein *p*, *cresc.*, *f.*, *ff.*, *sf.*, *ten.*, *decresc.*, *pp*, keine Accentuation, Punctirung, Bindung oder Syncope ausser Acht, die alle (wie von einem tüchtigen Componisten anzunehmen ist) ihren Grund und ihre Bedeutung haben. Ausserdem höre er oft und mit ganzer Seele dem Gesange und Vortrage grosser Künstler zu, lausche ihnen (nicht ihre Manieren, sondern) ihre Vorzüge und Trefflichkeiten ab; suche ferner in das Wesen classischer Tonstücke einzudringen, und mit dem Verständnisse, mit der Bildung des Geschmacks, wird sich auch ein guter und edler Vortrag einstellen, und dem Sänger zur zweiten Natur werden. — Etwas ganz anderes aber ist es mit dem Ausdrucke, der sich durch keinen Unterricht erlernen, durch keine Anweisungen erwerben lässt, vielmehr ein Geschenk des Himmels, ein Besitzthum weniger Auserlesener ist! Man könnte den Vortrag den Körper, den Ausdruck aber die Seele des Gesanges nennen. Der schönste Vortrag kann nur Bewunderung erwecken, während der wahre Ausdruck allein hinreißt, beseligt und dem Gesange seinen höchsten Zauber verleiht. Der Vortrag kann gelehrt, der Ausdruck nur geweckt werden. Jener befolgt genau die gegebenen Vorschriften und sucht seinen Ruhm in der trefflichen und technisch vollendeten Ausführung eines Tonstückes — dieser schöpft aus sich selbst, aus der Tiefe des menschlichen Herzens; er ist nicht nur empfänglich für jede Empfindung, von der Herbigkeit des tiefsten Schmerzes bis zur Wonne des höchsten Jubels — sondern er vermag dieselbe Stimmung auf alle Zuhörer zu übertragen, er kommt vom Herzen und spricht mächtig zu jedem fühlenden Herzen.

*Sieber, ABC der Gesangkunst.

Soll aber der Ausdruck eine solche Macht üben können, so muss allerdings neben der Begabung mit diesem Zauber, auch der Schönheitssinn geweckt, das ästhetische Gefühl des Sängers gebildet, sein Geschmack veredelt, seine Anschauungsweise geläutert sein, auf dass er nie die Grenzen des Schönen überschreite und selbst auf dem Gipfel der Affecte stets den Adel der Ausführung bewahre. Welche Aufgabe für den Gesanglehrer, solche Schüler zu bilden!?

Vereinigen sich ein vollendeter Vortrag und ein wahrer, empfindungsreicher — allezeit edler Ausdruck, dann kann man mit Thibaut ausrufen: "Was vergleicht sich der menschlichen Stimme?" —

VERSCHIEDENES.

Gehört das Orgelstimmen zu der Amtstätigkeit des Organisten? Das Stimmen einer Orgel setzt praktische Erfahrung und Uebung voraus, welche wohl einem Orgelbauer oder professionellen Orgelstimmer, nicht aber dem Organisten zugemutet werden können. Ein Organist, dem diese Uebung fehlt, soll die Hände vom Orgelstimmen weglassen, da er leicht die Sache nur verschlimmert. Weil ohnedies eine solche Arbeit ziemliche Zeit beansprucht, müsste dieselbe ihm wohl extra vergütet werden und da ist es besser, diese Vergütung einem sachkundigen Manne zukommen zu lassen, umsomehr als mit dem Stimmen auch häufig das Reinigen der Orgel und nicht selten kleine Reparaturen nötig sind. Das beste in allen Fällen ist es, mit einem zuverlässigen Orgelbauer einen Kontrakt zu machen für regelmässiges Stimmen und Instandhaltung der Orgel. Besonders vorsichtig sei man gegenüber den "wandernden Stimmern für Alles"! Ich kenne manche Fälle, in welchen solche unkundige Leute die Orgelpfeifen in erschreckender Weise verschnitten und versägt und die Orgeln sehr geschädigt haben. Was aber jeder ordentliche Organist können und besorgen muss, dass ist das Stimmen der etwa in seiner Orgel vorkommenden Zungenregister, weil diese sich so oft verstimmen, dass man nicht immer einen Orgelbauer herbeirufen kann, und das Stimmen der Zungenregister sehr leicht und rasch getan ist.

Gilt auch für erwachsene Klavierspieler. "Die keine Ida dort spielt Klavier ganz im Sinne der hl. Schrift." — "Warum denn?" — "Bei ihr weiss auch die Linke nicht, was die Rechte tut."